

**“The stronger the Family,
the stronger the Army,
because Families improve
combat readiness.”**

Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army

Family 
safe is Family strong!



**ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG**

Family Engagement Kit

As leaders, we've come to realize that "battle buddies" are a key factor in keeping Soldiers safe on the battlefield. They provide each other with an extra set of eyes and ears and, sometimes, a much needed sanity check.

On the home front, a Soldier's "battle buddy" is often his or her Family. Family members are frequently the front line of defense when it comes to affecting a Soldier's decision making process or reaction to a particular situation. And just as engaged leadership has made a difference in Soldiers' safety on-duty, engaged Families can have that same impact in our Soldiers' off-duty safety as well.

I ask each of you to be that homefront "battle buddy" and help the Army take better care of your Soldier. Family members are also each other's "battle buddies" when their spouses are deployed. Watch over each other and recognize when to step in to help or to ask for help. Soldiers can better do their jobs when they know their Families are safe back home.

With your help we can better protect our Nation's most valued assets – our Soldiers and their Family members. This kit has simple, yet effective, "how to" instructions combined with other useful aids.

Army Safe is Army Strong



WILLIAM T. WOLF
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding General
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

Major Concerns

- **Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs)**
 - There were 115 Soldiers killed in off-duty POV accidents from Oct 1, 2009 – Sept 30, 2010
- **Of the 115 fatalities**
70 percent were SGT or below
- **The average age of**
Soldiers fatally injured
in off-duty accidents
this past year was 23



Privately Owned Vehicles

- Speed, alcohol, and fatigue are the leading cause for POV accident fatalities
- There were more fatal accidents involving sedans than any other kind of vehicle
- The majority of fatal accidents occurred between the hours of **midnight and 6 a.m.**

While seat belt use is mandatory, Soldiers continue to drive without buckling up. Even though we know seat belts save lives, sadly, many of our Soldiers killed last year were not wearing one.

www.nhtsa.gov

www.safety.army.mil



Privately Owned Motorcycles

- **39 Soldiers** lost their lives in FY10 compared to 32 Soldiers in FY09. Speed continues to be the leading cause of Motorcycle accident fatalities
- Like many other skills, riding skills are perishable. Seek additional training, which is offered at most installations
- Consider the selection of a new motorcycle a family decision. To get more information about motorcycles, check out our Website at <http://safety.army.mil>

Leading Causes of Accidents

- **Speeding**
- **Aggressive driving**
- **Distracted driving**
- **Fatigue**
- **Alcohol**



Speeding

- **Speeding is driving faster than the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions**
- **According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), during 2009 more than 10,000 lives were lost across America in speeding-related traffic crashes**
- **National crash data shows that 25-30 percent of all fatal accidents are attributed to speed**
- **Despite advancements in vehicle safety and passenger protection, thousands die each year in speed-related crashes**



Distracted Driving

- According to AAA, distracted driving is a major contributor to car crashes
- Between 4,000 and 8,000 distracted driving crashes occur daily in the U.S.
- Distracted driving contributes to nearly 3 million U.S. crashes a year



Action	Number of times more likely to have an accident
Reaching for a moving object	9
Looking at an external object	3.7
Reading	3
Applying makeup	3
Dial a hand-held device (e.g., cell phone)	3
Talking or listening on hand-held device	1.3

Aggressive Driving

- An aggressive driver is someone who commits traffic offenses endangering other people or property
- Three categories of aggression:
 - Lack of courtesy (obscene gestures, refusing to yield, etc.)
 - Breaking the rules (speeding, running red lights, etc.)
 - Angry driving (tailgating, frequent lane changes, flash lights, etc.)
- Consequences include:
 - Physical and mental harm
 - Legal and financial hardship
- In its extreme form, aggressive driving can escalate into “**road rage**.”



www.nhtsa.gov/aggressive

Falling Asleep at the Wheel is No Laughing Matter



Thag Anderson becomes the first fatality as a result of falling asleep at the wheel.

Fatigue

- We spend one-third of our lives sleeping
- Approximately 70 million people in the U.S. are affected by one or more sleep problems
- Drowsy drivers cause an estimated 100,000 police reported crashes each year
- Fatigue related crashes are more likely to result in a fatality
- Early signs of fatigue:
 - Yawn repeatedly
 - Can't remember having driven the past few miles
 - Difficulty focusing or keeping eyes open

www.sleepfoundation.org

www.drowsydriving.org

Fatigue Calculator

- Q1: How much sleep have you had in the 24 hours prior to when you woke today?
- Q2: How much sleep have you had in the 48 hours prior to when you woke today?
- Q3: How long will you have been awake from when you got up today through till the end of your working day?

Try a program designed by the Centre for Sleep Research. The Fatigue Calculator will calculate a Fatigue Risk Score, which is categorized as:

**Low
Risk**

**Slightly
Elevated
Risk**

**Moderate
Risk**

**High
Risk**

www.fatiguecalculator.com.au

Travel Risk Planning System

- **TRiPS is a tool to help you plan your drive**
- **It is designed to reinforce common sense driving, such as staying alert, not drinking, getting adequate sleep, wearing your seat belt, and slowing down**
- **Last year alone the Army lost, on average, one Soldier every three days in a POV accident**
- **So do your part. Fill out TRiPS with your spouse. Be aware of driving risks and take the appropriate precautions**

TRAVEL RISK
TRiPS
PLANNING SYSTEM



The use of TRiPS has proven to be a life saver.

Fill out your TRiPS at <https://trips.safety.army.mil>

Alcohol

- **Alcohol Usage:** According to NHTSA, 10,839 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in 2009. These accidents accounted for 34 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the United States
- **The 10,839 fatalities represent an average of one alcohol impaired driving fatality every 48 minutes**
- **In 2009, 224 children were killed in alcohol-related crashes**
- **Consequences for military personnel**
 - Enlisted Soldiers can face penalties which, may result in forfeiture of pay, reduction of rank, 45 days extra duty and 60 days restriction
 - Officers can also face forfeiture of pay and 30 days arrest in quarters or 60 days restriction
 - Accidents involving alcohol can be ruled Not in the Line of Duty and can result in the loss of Family benefits

www.cdc.gov

www.nhtsa.gov

Other Off-Duty Activities

In addition to POV accidents, other leading causes of off-duty accidents include:

- **Water-related activities**
(Watercraft/fishing/swimming)
- **Pedestrian activities**
(Struck by vehicle/train/bicycle)
- **Weapons-related activities**
(Mishandling/firing of a weapon)
- **Sporting activities**
(Basketball/football)



Water Related Activities

- From Oct 1, 2009 – Sept 30, 2010 eight Soldiers died in swimming or boating accidents
- The majority of driving accidents occurred during the weekend



Intervention/Prevention Measures

- Swim only in authorized areas and avoid alcohol
- **Always have someone accompany you when swimming**
- Take a Safe Boating course and wear a personal flotation device
- Avoid being a victim of someone Boating Under the Influence (BUI)

Check out our interactive water safety Web site at:
<https://safety.army.mil/SafetyCity/Pages/Water/WaterSafety.aspx>

Pedestrian Activities

- From Oct 1, 2009 – Sept 30, 2010 13 Soldiers died as pedestrians; eight were killed between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- Four of the 13 fatalities occurred while attempting to cross a multi-lane highway
- Ten pedestrian fatalities were at night and reflective gear was not worn

Intervention/Prevention Measures

- Walk on sidewalks and use crosswalks
- No sidewalks: walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible
- Have a designated driver or use a taxi if consuming alcohol
- Be extremely careful of traffic when you stop to help a motorist in distress
- Consider reflective gear when walking at night
- Know the local laws pertaining to pedestrians

Weapons-Related Activities

- From Oct 1, 2009 to Sept 30, 2010 two Soldiers died from negligent discharge of a privately owned weapon
- Both deaths occurred during the hours of 10 p.m. and midnight
- Both Soldiers were 21 years old



Intervention/Prevention Measures

- Take a gun safety class to get and stay familiar with your weapons
- Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox: <https://safety.army.mil/POWSafety>
- Do not handle weapons when consuming alcohol
- Always **THINK** weapons safety:
 - Treat every weapon as if it's loaded
 - Handle every weapon with care
 - Identify the target before you fire
 - Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot
 - Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire



Sporting Activities

- Basketball and football: top injury-causing activities
- Fractures, dislocations, sprains and strains
- Over-training is a growing problem



Intervention/Prevention Measures

- Wear appropriate protective equipment
- Ensure suitable warm up and stretching prior to activity
- Monitor fluid intake to prevent dehydration
- Attend training for specialized activities
- Check out the Ground Risk Assessment Tool (GRAT) on the USACR/Safety Center Website



www.sportssafety.org/

Other Family Concerns

- Sleep Problems
- Depression
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)
- Financial Stress
- Family Bonding



Sleep Problems

- **Difficulty falling asleep**
- **Difficulty staying asleep**
- **Stop breathing during sleep**
- **Excessive snoring**
- **Limb jerking**
- **Wake up still feeling tired**
- **Difficulty staying awake during the day**

All of these problems can be treated.

Check out www.sleepfoundation.org for more information.

Depression

- Symptoms of depression may differ for everyone; however, the following are some examples that many may experience:
 - Persistently sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
 - Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt or worthlessness
 - Irritability, restlessness, fatigue or decreased energy
 - Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
 - A change in sleep pattern or excessive sleepiness
 - Overeating or appetite loss
 - Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- The Army suicide rate has **increased** from **12.4** per 100,000 in **2003** to an estimated **22** per 100,000 in **2009**
- Depression is treatable and **suicide** is preventable!

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.nami.org

PTSD

- **Nearly 23 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans were diagnosed with possible PTSD**
- **Symptoms may include flashbacks, excessive nightmares, isolation from others, numbing of emotions, hyper-arousal or irritability**
- **PTSD may worsen without treatment and remember, it can even show up several months or years after a person leaves the battlefield**
- **More than 150,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans received treatment for PTSD**
- **For more information contact your local veterans health administration**

www.nami.org

www.battlemind.org

mTBI (Concussion)

- **Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: a relatively mild blow to the brain can impair memory, attention, mental organization and logical thinking.**
- **Common signs and symptoms:**
 - Headaches or neck pains that do not go away
 - Difficulty remembering, concentrating or making decisions
 - Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting or reading
 - Mood changes
 - Getting lost or easily confused
 - Changes in sleep patterns or feeling tired all of the time
 - Blurred vision, eyes that tire easily, increased sensitivity to light

www.cdc.gov

www.militaryonesource.com

Commonalities:

■ Sleep Loss, PTSD, Alcohol Abuse, and mTBI



HEALTH

- Increased risk for depression

WORK

- Errors
- Impaired concentration
- Slowed reaction time
- Poor work performance

RELATIONSHIP

- Impatient
- Cranky
- Irritable

SAFETY

- Slowed reaction times
- Higher incidence of workplace and traffic accidents
- Microsleeps (unintended mini-naps)

Financial Stress

- People experiencing financial stress are more likely to numb their anxiety by drinking, smoking, overeating and practicing other unhealthy coping behaviors. This in turn leads to more stress
- Family finances may change when your Soldier returns home and is no longer receiving hazardous duty and family separation pay
- Emotions, both positive and negative, can drive spending and cause you to go deep into debt
- Recognize that you and your spouse can experience anxiety, frustration and a sense of hopelessness as your debt piles up

Make a spending plan and stick to it.

www.militaryonesource.com

www.stress.about.com

Family Bonding

- Coming together as a couple after deployment isn't always easy
- Each person has grown and changed during the separation and taken on new responsibilities
- Most couples argue about three things: children, money and sex
- Be patient with yourself and your family. Fatigue, confusion and worry—common during a transition—can lead to short tempers
- It's a two-way street. Negotiate the transition of family duties as your home returns to normal
- Know when to seek help
- Comprehensive Soldier Fitness - Know your baseline for the four dimensions of strength (emotional, social, spiritual, and family) by taking the Global Assessment Tool (GAT) at:

<http://www.army.mil/csf/family.html>



Summary

- From Oct 1, 2009 – Sept 30, 2010 we lost almost 2.5 times as many Soldiers in off-duty accidents than in on-duty accidents
- Be aware of the at-risk activities that can affect you and your family, especially if you have a Soldier redeploying
- If you or your Soldier are having issues, please ask for help. There are many sources available to you and your Family. One of the best is www.Battlemind.army.mil

Thank you for all that you do to help us keep our Soldiers out of harms way. Your involvement is crucial to keeping our Soldiers safe while they are home!



Questions?

